

"Don't Blame Lovesick Girls," She  
Writes, if Their Love Leads Them  
in Desperation to Destroy  
a Rival.

# Mildred Brewster, MURDERESS. BY WINIFRED BLACK.

A Study of the Strange Young Woman  
Who Killed the Girl Whose  
Charms Had Won Miss  
Brewster's Lover.



MILDRED BREWSTER

The Vermont Girl Whose Jealous Despair When  
She Was Jilted Prompted Her to  
Slay Her Rival.

THIS is the story of two women and a man.

One of the women is twenty-one years old. She is dark and slender, and she has been pretty. The side of her face is distorted by a pistol shot wound. She is in prison awaiting trial for her life.

The other woman was seventeen years old. She was flaxen-haired and brown-eyed. She was a good, capable girl, with what New Englanders call "faculty." She had a great deal of common sense, and she was eminently practical. She was much admired by her neighbors, and she was called very pretty.

She is dead. The other woman killed her. The act happened in Montpelier, Vt. Montpelier is a beautiful little old-fashioned, wide-streeted New England city. It lies in the hollow of a scoop in the granite hills. Just now it is ablaze with the scarlet and yellow leaves of autumn.

There's a street full of stately colonial houses there, and there's a dignified State House, and there's a swift stream running through the prime little city, under covered wooden bridges, as if it were trying to get away somewhere before any one could arrest it for disturbing the peace.

All the life in the prime little city is centered now about these two women—one dead and the other waiting to die. They were both farmer's daughters.

One of them, the one who is waiting to die, was a school teacher in a country village, and then she was a tailoress, and then she worked in a factory, and then she went to one of the neighbors and "worked out."

The other, the one who is dead, was the "help" at her cousin's, a well-to-do farmer on the edge of the town.

There are no servants in a New England town.

On the 29th of last May Anna Wheeler, the girl who is dead, was up bright and early, getting her work out of the way.

She was going to a neighboring village to see a Decoration Day celebration. Her cousin was not very well, and she wanted to get everything done before she went away for the day.

Next, as she was getting breakfast on the table, some one knocked at the kitchen door. She opened the door, and there stood a round-faced, pleasant-looking girl.

"Are you Anna Wheeler?" said the girl at the door.

"Yes," said the girl in the kitchen.

"I am Mildred Brewster," said the pleasant-faced girl. "I want to see you about something."

Anna Wheeler stepped out of the door, and she and Mildred Brewster talked together for a few minutes. Then the two girls came into the kitchen, and Anna Wheeler cleared the breakfast table and wiped the dishes and made things tidy in the old-fashioned kitchen.

She introduced Mildred Brewster to her cousin, Mrs. Wheeler, who came into the room, and Mildred Brewster talked with Mrs. Wheeler and played with the Wheeler children and made herself very pleasant and agreeable.

Anna Wheeler went into the front of the house to do her work there, and Mrs. Wheeler followed her.

"She's not pleasant spoken," said Mrs. Wheeler to Anna Wheeler. "Who is she?"

"She's Mildred Brewster," said Anna Wheeler. "She says Jack is engaged to her. I told her I didn't see how he could be, for he was engaged to me. She said that we'd better see him about that and let him decide. I told her all right. I was going to the celebration with him to-day, and she could go along up to his house, and we'd see. So she's going."

Mrs. Wheeler asked Anna Wheeler if she was not afraid of the girl, but Anna Wheeler laughed and said: "I guess I can take care of myself if she goes to pulling hair. Might as well get this settled now as any time. I know well enough what Jack will say."

Anna Wheeler finished her work and the two girls started across lots to the house where Jack Wheeler lived. It was raining, and they walked under the same umbrella.

When they were well up the hill and across the field, in plain sight of the house where Jack Wheeler lived, Mildred Brewster took a pistol from under her cloak and shot Anna Wheeler through the head. Then she shot herself. The neighbors ran to the spot and picked both girls up, unconscious.

They were taken to the hospital. Anna Wheeler died. Mildred Brewster lived. And all Montpelier is rent with conflicting sympathies.

Some say that Mildred Brewster was insane. Some say that she was simply jealous. Some say that Anna Wheeler taunted her with her despair and her disgrace, for it had come to disgrace with Mildred Brewster, and that the thought of her betrayal and desertion became all at once too much for Mildred Brewster; and some say that it was a deliberate and cold-blooded murder.

Mildred Brewster was desperately in love with Jack Wheeler. That every one knows. Jack Wheeler had been very attentive to her, and all the people who know the girl at all well knew that he was "keeping company" with her, as they say in New England. When he began to visit Anna Wheeler Mildred Brewster shut herself in her room for awhile and cried.

Then she came out and began to haunt the streets where Jack Wheeler walked. She stopped him on the street corners and tried to go him to talk to her. She wrote to him, then followed him day after day and night after night.

The night before she killed Anna Wheeler she stood in the rain and waited for him outside the avenue where he was dwelling. No one will ever know what she said to him that night unless she tells it when she goes upon the stand in her trial.

I have been to Montpelier to see Mildred Brewster. She has just been taken from the hospital to the jail.

The jail in Montpelier is a big, roomy, old-fashioned New England mansion, with a parlor full of plants and tidies and worked mottoes.

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Mildred Brewster



Her Unmarked  
Grave

The  
Quarry-  
man  
with the  
Soft,  
Gray Irish  
Eyes,



JOHN WHEELER

For  
Whose  
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Is Dead  
Another  
In Jail.



HOW THE MURDERESS AND HER VICTIM  
WERE FOUND.

## MISS BREWSTER ON THE ETHICS OF LOVE.

Don't blame lovesick girls, for they were made thus loving. A handsome girl is something: one real good, willing, self-sacrificing more; but one who loves to distraction is the most. Take those lukewarm, indifferent, loveless beauties, you would become marital martyrs. She is the premium wife whose fervid, glowing, whole-souled, devoted love knows no limit; who is spellbound, magnetized and entranced—beside herself when beside her lover; whose love, torrent like, sweeps all before it, making all possible allowances for imperfections in the loved one, and magnifying to the highest degree all his desirable and lovable traits of character.

MILDRED BREWSTER.

There's a matron there who is plump-checked and gray-haired and who wears glasses, and who would stand for a type of New England thrift and virtue and respectability anywhere in the round world.

I went through the parlor and past a cheery dining-room and a clean, comfortable kitchen, up some narrow stairs, and at the head of the stairs there was a clean, cheery bedroom, with an old-fashioned stove and a counterpane of the snufower pattern worked in red and white calico, and a mocking bird in a cage, and Harper's and Scribner's magazines on a table.

In that room sat Mildred Brewster, murderess.

Mildred Brewster is a little, slim, graceful woman, with neat black hair, big, sunken, black eyes and a pitiful mouth, pitifully disfigured.

She has a round, clear-skinned face, which must have had a beauty of its own before she shot herself and drew the muscles out of shape; and she has very small, delicate hands and a low voice of some refinement.

She sat on the edge of the bed, and she looked at me with eyes full of sullen pain. She said that she was feeling well. "As well as I can expect to feel. They didn't find the bullet in my head. It's there yet. Ain't it queer it didn't kill me? I guess my head is hard. They say some folks have got hard heads. I don't know how you can tell. Mine must be, anyway. I'm daisy a good deal. I can't walk across this room. I get dizzy if I try. I can't even read. It hurts my head. One thing, I sleep pretty well. The doctor gives me something to take nights. He says I've got to sleep, anyway. It don't make much odds how I am, I guess. I'll never be well. Anyhow, I don't think of her name. She's a big woman. She's in here for poisoning her husband. They say she did it: she and a man. The man is in the other part of the jail. She says she didn't do it. I got along with her well enough. There's a girl in here for stealing. She's Italian. I don't know whether it's true or not."

"I can't talk about my case. My lawyer says not to. My father stays by me. He's real good that way, father is. I guess he'd been glad if he'd heard I was dead, too, that night. I would, anyway. But he's real good. He says he'll do everything he can to help me."

"There isn't anything he can do. There isn't anything anybody can do, unless they kill me. That would help some. I'm twenty-one. Wouldn't you think I was old enough to look after myself? I've been away since I was about seventeen, trying to do for myself."

"My mother's dead. She died when I was sixteen. I was alone in the room with her. I knew that she was sick, but that was all. All at once she turned her head and gave me a queer look—and she was dead. I was scared. I ran out and called the folks in. We lived on a farm. I didn't like living on the farm. It takes so long to get where you can see folks when you live on a farm. I wanted to get an education, and my father sent me to Burlington to school. He was always real good to me, father was. After that I tried to do for myself. I think girls that do that have a hard time. I wish I'd stayed home. I believe a girl is better off at home, no matter if it is lonesome. Folks don't seem to have much use for a girl that has to take care of herself. I don't know why."

"I've got till November to wait for my case. I wish it was over, one way or the other, I don't care which. It comes hard on me being shut up like this. I'm used to outdoors. But I couldn't get out, anyway, I'm so weak, so I guess it don't matter much."

And that is all that Mildred Brewster, twenty-one years old, on trial for her life, would say.

She said it all in a low, even monotony of tone, like one who talks to herself.

There was not a quiver of her eyelash when she spoke of death and of her longing for it.

The thin hands lay limp and flaccid in her lap. There was a cheap ring on one of them. When she saw me looking at it she covered that hand with the other, and sat so while I was there.

The women who occupy the room with her were in the kitchen ironing.

The woman who is under sentence of death for poisoning her husband stood at the stove doing an iron. Her strong, plump, white arms gleamed from her dark sleeves.

"How was she?" she said. "Talk much? She's queer. Sometimes she'll talk—you can't stop her—and sometimes she won't speak, no matter what you say."

"She tells things she ought to keep to herself," said the matron. "Things no girl ought to tell."

"Does she seem to love the man yet?"

The woman at the stove listened with uplifted iron. She went into the hallway.

"Well," said the matron, shutting her firm mouth very tight and lifting her brows, "I guess, from her own story, she was a good deal too fond of him." Her delicate face flushed scarlet. "She won't hear to anything against him, though."

I went to see the relatives of the girl who is dead, and I heard how pretty Anna was and how capable and how smart. She could cook a dinner for a whole family when she was eleven years old. She was a master hand at housework and at sewing, and at almost anything she tried to do. She loved to work, and she was as smart as any girl in town.

She could take good care of herself, and no one ever dreamed that she would be hurt in any way, even when they heard of the Brewster girl and of her mad jealousy. Some of the neighbors knew about the Brewster girl, but no one ever dreamed that a smart, capable, good girl like Anna could come to any harm through a wild-headed creature like that.

And now Anna was dead. Dead and buried at seventeen in a lonely little grave in the hillside burying ground. Murdered by a jealous woman.

And the man in the case?

Oh, the man in the case is young and handsome, and he has his work to do, and he can't let a couple of women ruin his life.

I had a little talk with the man in the case. He was at work in the stone quarry when I saw him. He's straight and well made, and he has a splendid pillar of a throat and a pair of soft, Irish-gray eyes.

He feels very badly over the whole affair. "It's pretty bad for me," he said. "The girl I was engaged to is dead, and my name is on every tongue. I went with the Brewster girl for a while, and then I met Anna, and I got to going with her, and that's all there is to it."

"I couldn't be made to go with a girl when I'd got tired of her, could I? She was always following me around. I couldn't get rid of her. I never saw the like of her for writing letters and coming after me."

"Was I ever in love with her? Well, I don't know. She was a good-looking girl enough till she took to crying all the time. That would make any girl look homesick. But I never thought of marrying her—not after I met Anna, anyhow."

And that is all there is to the story from the point of view of the man in the case.

WINIFRED BLACK.